

*The State of Nevada has now given its fourth series of acupuncture licensing examinations. In all, 62 candidates have taken examinations. Licenses have been granted to 27 persons as master acupuncturists (Doctors of Traditional Chinese Medicine or Doctors of Acupuncture) and to 6 as Acupuncture Assistants. At present, 4 acupuncturists practice in the Reno area and 13 in Las Vegas.*

## *Acupuncture in Nevada, Second Report*

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SINCE THE previous article on acupuncture in Nevada appeared in the JOURNAL,<sup>1</sup> licensing procedures by the Nevada State Board of Oriental Medicine have been strengthened and are operating smoothly. Examinations of candidates are given in the first week of May and in the first week of December each year.

The Nevada Oriental Medicine Act requires that an applicant must have had a minimum of three years of formal training in acupuncture and Oriental medicine in addition to ten years in practice before taking the examinations for a license as a master acupuncturist (Doctor of Traditional Chinese Medicine or Doctor of Acupuncture). Being licensed as an MD or a DO does not automatically qualify a person for a license from this board.

The current position of the Nevada State Board of Oriental Medicine is that medical doctors who are properly trained in acupuncture may use it as one method of treatment in their medical practice without additional licensing from the Board. However, under the Oriental Medicine Act, a physician who represents himself to the public as an acu-

puncture specialist is required to first be licensed as a Doctor of Traditional Chinese Medicine or a Doctor of Acupuncture by the State Board of Oriental Medicine, meeting all the pertinent requirements of law and regulation.

Licenses are granted in four categories: Doctor of Traditional Oriental Medicine, Doctor of Acupuncture, Doctor of Herbology and Acupuncture Assistant. To be licensed as a Doctor of Traditional Oriental Medicine, a candidate must have achieved passing grades in both acupuncture and herbology examinations. As yet, no one has been licensed merely as a Doctor of Herbology.

The State of Nevada has now given its acupuncture licensing examinations four times. A total of 62 applicants have been tested. Of these, 27 have been licensed as Doctors of Traditional Chinese Medicine or Doctors of Acupuncture and 6 as Acupuncture Assistants. There are 4 acupuncturists in practice in the Reno area and 13 in Las Vegas. All are of Oriental extraction.

The application fee to take the examinations is \$100. An investigative fee deposit of \$300 is also required at the time an application is submitted. Candidates must pay all expenses for the investigations of their background and training. Qualifications are carefully checked by the Board.

Examinations take three days in all. The written

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portions are made up of true-false and multiple choice questions and are given in the language of the applicant's choice. Candidates must pay translation costs if translations are required. Applicants may take the examinations only three times in any five-year period. The first day's examinations are entirely written and cover basic science questions. Included are questions on anatomy, physiology, chemistry, bacteriology, pathology, first aid and hygiene. The herbology section of the test is given on the afternoon of the first day. The second day consists of morning and afternoon examinations (also written) on acupuncture and traditional Oriental medicine. The third day is taken up by practical and demonstrative examinations, oral questions and evaluations of fluency in the English language—the Nevada Board of Oriental Medicine requires fluency in spoken English for master-level licenses.

The Board contracts with Dr. Thomas M. Cassese, a Professor of Education at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, who, for a consulting fee, assembles the test questions into examination form, administers the tests and provides the Board with an evaluation of test results. Between 400 and 700 questions are used in each series of examinations. Testing procedures now have become quite well established. Members of the Board of Oriental Medicine evaluate the candidates' English-speaking abilities but otherwise do not participate in administering the tests. Licensees may submit additional questions to the pool of test questions maintained by Dr. Cassese. Licensees, on request, participate and assist in testing candidates during the demonstration portions of the examinations. The Board does not give out samples of examination questions and copies of examinations are carefully guarded because the pool of questions from which examinations are taken has not been easy to develop.

Candidates for licenses as Acupuncture Assistants are required to have had a minimum of three years of training and three years of experience in the practice of acupuncture in order to take the examinations. Candidates for master-level licenses who pass the examinations but who lack ability in spoken English are licensed as Acupuncture Assistants until such time as they are able to meet the Board's requirements for proficiency in English.

The provision in the Oriental Medicine Act allowing acupuncturists with 20 years of experience to be licensed without taking examinations

was set aside by the Board of Oriental Medicine at its first meeting, May 15, 1973, and therefore no one has been granted a license under a grandfather clause. The word "may" in the Act gave the Board the option to take this action. All applicants for license are required to take the Board's examinations.

The Nevada State Legislature, which meets only every other year, passed the Chinese Medicine Act in 1973 allowing nonphysician acupuncturists to practice in Nevada. The 1975 Legislature, now adjourned, made only minor changes in the law: the name Chinese Medicine was changed to Oriental Medicine and under A.B. 26—which passed the Legislature and was signed into law by Governor Mike O'Callaghan—it was mandated that all health and accident insurance policies sold in Nevada after July 1, 1975 must provide coverage for treatment and services carried out by licensees of the Nevada State Board of Oriental Medicine.

At present there are no accredited schools or colleges of oriental medicine in Nevada. (To our knowledge the establishment of one such school is possibly being contemplated at this time.) In this regard the Nevada statutes read as follows: "A school or college of Oriental medicine may be established and maintained in this state only if (a) Its establishment is approved by the Board, (b) Its curriculum is approved annually by the Board for content and quality of instruction in accordance with the requirements of this chapter . . . The Board may prescribe the courses of study required."<sup>2</sup> No money has been voted by the Legislature for such a school and if and when one is established it would necessarily have to be private.

In a number of other states there continues to be public pressure for laws that will legalize acupuncture and the practice of Oriental medicine. The Nevada experience continues to appear to be a satisfactory method of handling the issues and problems involved in licensure and control. (It might be noted that in Montana, which also has an acupuncture licensing law, several persons have been licensed to practice acupuncture by virtue of their Nevada licenses.)

The Nevada Board of Oriental Medicine will continue to follow acupuncture practice and report on it regularly.

#### REFERENCES

1. Edwards WM Jr: Acupuncture in Nevada (Government and Medicine). *West J Med* 120:507-512, Jun 1974
2. Nevada Revised Statutes 634A.090: Approval of schools of Oriental medicine. Apr 20, 1973